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SECURITY INFORMATION

COUNTRY Czechoslovakia

TOPIC 74th Infantry Regiment in Karlovy Vary.

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DATE OF CONTENT prior to 17 July 1951

DATE PREPARED 4 October 1951

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1. Prior to 17 July 1951, the 74th Belocerkevsky Inf Regt [redacted] was located in Karlovy Vary (N 51/P 69) where it had been transferred from Most (N 51/F 13) between June and December 1950. Its headquarters, the regiment units and the 1st and 2d Bns were quartered in the Dvory II Barracks, the 3d Bn in the Dvory I Barracks. (1)

2. The regiment was subordinate to the 13th Inf Div in Karlovy Vary which was commanded by Colonel Rytir, (fmu). Infantry units in Cheb (N 51/P 37), Mari. Lazne (Marienbad) (N 50/P 56) and Kladno (N 51/L 59) and an artillery unit in Sokolov (Falkenau) (N 51/I 50) were also subordinate to this division. (2)

3. Officers of the regiment included Lieutenant Colonel Fahrner, (fmu), commanding officer, who succeeded Colonel Dorfsky, (fmu), the commanding officer in Most; Junior Lieutenant Bliznicenko, (fmu), political officer; Major Knezu, (fmu), chief of staff; Major Pohoralek, commanding officer of 1st Bn; Major Klicek, (fmu), commanding officer of 2d Bn; and Staff Capt Naprstek, (fmu), commanding officer of 3d Bn. (3)

4. The regiment had three organic battalions and the regimental units, including the headquarters company, the submachine gun company, the reconnaissance company and the motor transport company. There were also an AT artillery unit, an artillery unit and a mortar unit of undetermined subordination. The 1st Bn was organized into the 1st through 3d Inf Cos, the 4th SMG Co and a signal unit; the 2d Bn into the 6th through 8th Inf Cos, with the 8th Co consisting of first-rate troops and called the Guards Company, the 9th SMG Co and a 10th Co of an undetermined type; and the 3d Bn into the 11th through 13th Inf Co, with the 13th Co numbering 36 to 39 men and consisting of 2 platoons of 3 squads each, the 11th Engr Co which used to be outside the post, and the NCO school being the 15th Co. From the mess bulletin the total strength of the regiment was estimated at 1,200 to 1,500 troops. The strength fluctuated, with personnel being detached to labor brigades. (4)

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5. The mortar company was equipped with Soviet 120-mm mortars. Formerly equipped with 45-mm AT guns, in May 1951 the AT artillery company was furnished with new Soviet 57-mm AT guns with barrels about 4 meters long, without muzzle brake, which were towed by old Steyr motor vehicles. The infantry gun company had Soviet 76.2-mm guns. The 13th Co was equipped with 70 model 98/31 rifles, 6 Czech model 26 light machine guns, 20 Czech model 48 submachine guns; 6 German telescopic-sight rifles and 2 Czech model 37 heavy machine guns. (5)
6. In early 1951, about 30 new Praga RN trucks, 10 new Skoda jeeps and about 10 Jawa motorcycles were issued to the regiment. In addition, there were about 30 x 1½-ton Aero-150 trucks, about 12 old Steyr motor vehicles and 5 old jeeps. After the arrival of the motorcycles, about 50 horses were still in the Dvory II Barracks. (6)
7. Between 15 June and 15 July 1951, summer maneuvers were held in the Kaiserwald, with units from Karlovy Vary, two infantry battalions from Podborany (N 51/L 09), and units from Cheb, Kar. Lazne, Kladno and Sokolov participating. Firing practice with light infantry weapons was held during the first week and field exercises at regimental level during the second week. The exercises also involved about 5 T-34 tanks and one 1 SP gun of about 100mm from Zatec (N 51/F 10), two 105-mm batteries from Sokolov and some fighter planes. The phases of the exercises included combat in towns, annihilation of pockets of resistance, etc.
8. In the summer of 1950, a course of instruction in the use of chemical warfare agents (ECHL - bojove chemische latky) was held on the drill ground near Mimon (O 51/F 95). It was attended by soldiers from Podborany, Most, Karlovy Vary, Cheb, Litomerice (N 51/F 53) and Velvety, about 5 km south-east of Teplice Sanov (N 51/F 34). Gas detection was practiced and the concentration of the agent identified by means of German glass tubes. Decontamination was effected by employing chloride of lime. The trainees wore light German and heavy Czech gas protective clothing and old German gas masks with new filters.
9. Later on, practices were held with German model 41-N flame throwers, which included a pressure cylinder and one container each with summer and winter fuel. Soldiers wore gas masks and asbestos clothes.
10. In addition, a pencil containing a demolition charge a glass cylinder containing 3/4 liter of fuel for employment against tanks, and phosphorus strips for setting fire on corn and houses were shown to the trainees. Lectures were given on remote-controlled stationary flame throwers and the physical principles of the atomic bomb.
11. In the spring of 1950, a Soviet general and other Soviet officers repeatedly inspected the Dvory II Barracks and the field exercises. The officers were billeted in the Imperial and Pupp Hotels. Numerous Soviet field-grade officers, including some who had dependents with them, were seen in the streets of Karlovy Vary.
12. In addition to the 3d Bn, the Dvory I Barracks in Karlovy Vary quartered a unit of about 30 men with dogs. Entering of the unit's quarters was strictly prohibited. (7)
13. Training camps (VVT) were located in Lucenec (Q 49/D 01), Orenov Laz (Q 49/C 72), near Frydek-Mistek (Q 50/O 67) and near Vihorlat (R 49/E 95). An equipment depot was located in Litomerice and a ration supply depot in the large wine vaults of this town. In 1949, a motorized artillery unit with 76.2-mm and 57-mm guns was stationed in Kosice (R 49/E 34). About 10 T-34 tanks were also seen there. (8) The military skola Zizkova school, where the final examinations at high school level could also be passed, was located in Spisska Nova Ves (R 49/B 87).

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14. Prior to April 1950, an officer candidate school was located in a barracks installation on Komenskeho ul. in Kosice. Officers of the school included Major Lovik, (fmu), commanding officer; Lieutenant Cerny, (fmu), DOZ officer; and Staff Capt Jenik, (fmu), political officer. The school was organized into seven platoons of 30 to 40 men each. Instruction was given by civilian teachers of the local high school in physics, mathematics, geography, history, chemistry, Slovak language and political indoctrination. Military instruction included the study of ballistics, map reading, signal-communications, theoretical engineer training and employment of chemical warfare agents such as Yperite, nitrogen Yperite, Lewisite brombenzylicyanide, benzylbromide, chlorpicrin, phosgene and diphosgene. (9)

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Comments.

(1) The 74th Inf Regt [redacted] has been carried as belonging to the 12th Inf Div in Most. It has been known that the 1st Bn was transferred from Velvety to the Dvory I Barracks in Karlovy Vary in October 1950. It remains to be determined whether the infantry regiment in Most with all its battalions joined the 13th Inf Div or whether contingents of this regiment were left behind in order to be used for the activation of a new infantry regiment of the 12th Inf Div. There had been no information on the whereabouts of the 77th Inf Bn which has been carried in the Dvory II Barracks.

(2) The report confirms the 13th Inf Div in Karlovy Vary and its commanding officer Colonel or Major General Rytir, (fmu). Kladno is not in the billeting area of the 13th Inf Div. It is carried as the post of a motorized infantry unit of the 5th Mtz Inf Div in Slany.

(3) A Major Fahrner, (fmu), was reported to be DOZ officer of the 35th Inf Regt in Domaslice in January 1950. Staff Capt Naprstek, (fmu), was chief of staff of the 74th Inf Regt in Most in May 1949.

(4) An organic infantry battalion of a regiment is believed to consist of five companies. This belief is apparently confirmed by the report [redacted]

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[redacted] The engineer company and the ICU school are believed to be directly assigned to the regiment.

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(5) It has been repeatedly reported that the 45-mm guns of the infantry regiments would be replaced by Soviet 57-mm AT guns in the spring of 1951. [redacted]

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(6) The comparatively high number of motor vehicles indicates that the regiment is at least partially motorized. The components of the 13th Inf Div have been carried as horse-drawn units to date.

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(7) The unit probably belongs to the PS brigade, which is carried in Karlovy Vary.

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(8) The 261st AT Arty Bn is carried in Kosice. Tank troopers have not been reported stationed in Kosice. There has been only one vague report indicating that tanks were detrained in Kosice in the fall of 1949. [redacted]

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(9) Probably the school for infantry reserve officers, which is known to be located in Kosice.

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